

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully acknowledges receipt of the Final Office Action mailed September 25, 2006.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and indicated claims 1-28 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

By this Amendment, Applicant proposes to amend claims 1, 7, 9-12, 15, 16, and 21 to improve form and better define the claimed invention, cancel claims 2-5, 18-20, and 22-28, without prejudice or disclaimer, and add new claims 29-38. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 6-17, 21, and 29-38 will be pending. Of these claims, claims 1 and 21 are independent.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to claims 1, 7, 9-12, 15, 16, and 21. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-28. Consequently, Applicant has amended claims 1, 7, 9-12, 15, 16, and 21 to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 21 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 6-17 and 29-38 are in condition for allowance at least due to their corresponding dependence from independent claims 1 and 21.

Applicant traverses the rejection above and respectfully requests reconsideration for at least the reasons set forth below.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION

The Examiner's rejection of claims 1-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been rendered moot in view of the amendments to claims 1, 7, 9-12, 15, 16, and 21. Additionally, Applicant has added new claims 29-38, which meet the requirements of § 112, second paragraph. Applicant therefore requests that the rejection of claims 1-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

II. CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1, 6-17, 21, and 29-38 in condition for allowance. Applicant submits that the proposed amendments of claims 1, 7, 9-12, 15, 16, and 21 and the addition of claims 29-38 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicant submits that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant submits that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicant therefore requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: December 26, 2006

By: /David W. Hill/
David W. Hill
Reg. No. 28,220